



Inyo County Foster Care Commission receives quilts donated for foster children. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Terry McAteer, Inyo County superintendent of schools; David Lent, executive director, Toiyabe Indian Health Services; Sheriff Bill Lutze, Inyo County Sheriff's Department; Hon. Dean Stout, presiding judge, Inyo County Superior Court; Jean Turner, director, Inyo County Health and Human Services; Virginia Bird, court operations administrator and quilt project coordinator; Jeff Thomson, chief probation officer; Linda Benson, asst. director, Inyo County Health and Human Services; and Supervisor Susan Cash, Inyo County Board of Supervisors. Photo submitted

Foster kids get a warm embrace with 'Loving Stitches'

By Mike Bodine
Register Staff

Inyo County residents are donating their time, creativity and love to foster kids, by giving them something to call their own during their journey down the rugged road of being a ward of the state due to abuse or neglect.

The Inyo County Foster Care Commission has launched its "Loving Stitches For Foster Children - Handcrafted Quilt Project." The project has local residents making quilts for foster kids that they get to keep with them forever.

According to commission member Virginia Bird, the quilts are great tool in mending emotional trauma, easing separation anxiety and helping with displacement issues because they "belong to the kids and what makes them extra special is the time and love put into the quilts."

She also said the quilts are beautiful and detailed, and that she is very thankful to the quilters who have put so much time and expense into them.

Bird credits Judge Dean Stout with coming up with the

quilt idea as something kids could call their own.

"And who doesn't love snuggling up under a warm quilt?" Bird asked.

"Placement in foster care can be traumatic. The warmth and security that comes from wrapping yourself in your very own quilt can be very comforting to these vulnerable children," Stout explained.

Bird is asking the public to donate handcrafted quilts that will be given by Child Protective Services to foster children. Quilts are being accepted for children ranging from newborns to 18 years of age. Preferred sizes are newborn blankets, crib size (approximately 45x55), and throw size (approximately 50x60).

Bird said the quilts should be small enough to pack up and take with them if the child is on the go, a frequent circumstance of being in foster care.

Two local women, who wish to remain anonymous, have contributed to the project. One resident has donated four hand-made quilts, and a fifth quilt was recently donated by another local woman.

On behalf of the commis-

sion, Judge Stout said, "These are incredibly beautiful quilts, and I sincerely thank the donors for their tremendous kindness and generosity. These are truly gifts of love."

The Inyo County Foster Care

Commission is co-chaired by Stout and Health and Human Services Director Jean Turner. The commission was formed to implement the recommendations of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children

in Foster Care, and to otherwise address local issues affecting our foster children.



For more information or to donate a quilt, contact Virginia Bird at the Inyo County Superior Court by calling 873-5217.

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